

09/280292

**METHOD AND SYSTEM FOR AUTHENTICATING USERS
WHEN CONDUCTING COMMERCIAL TRANSACTIONS
USING A COMPUTER**

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

A method and system for authenticating users while conducting an auction via a computer system. The system can automatically authenticate users who have previously registered with the auction system and who have enabled automatic authentication. When a user is registered, the system may store authentication information in a cookie on the user's computer. When the user decides to perform a transaction (e.g., list item auction or place a bid for an item) that requires authentication, the system retrieves the stored authentication information. If automatic authentication is enabled, then the system allows the transaction to proceed without manual authentication. If, however, automatic authentication is not enabled or the system does not recognize the stored authentication information, then the system requests manual authentication. The use of automatic authentication allows a user to enter information relating to a transaction without manually entering any identification information. The system also defers manual authentication until a transaction is ready to proceed.

03208260